RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Solid Surf: An Assessment of the Heritage Value of late 1970s–early 1980s Concrete and Asphalt Skateboard Parks, and Strategies for their Protection and Conservation

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Abstract

Skateboarding is an important part of twenty-first century culture and has considerable cultural, financial and entertainment value, as indicated by its recent incorporation in the

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Tokyo Olympics in 2021. It is practised on human-made surfaces such as pavements and roads as well as on wooden ramps and within asphalt and concrete skateparks. Hundreds of examples of the latter were built worldwide during the skateboarding's "Second Wave" in the late 1970s–early 1980s, but nearly all were subsequently closed, infilled or destroyed. Very few original concrete parks of this key period survive and many are currently threatened with destruction. The historic status recently ascribed to two well-preserved examples in the UK and Australia underlines a need to assess the heritage value of the other remaining original skateparks, as well as to consider possible strategies for their protection and conservation. The present article tackles this poorly researched aspect of contemporary archaeology and heritage in detail for the first time, using selected examples of these unconventional historic structures from around the world.

Introduction

Skateboarding was initially popular from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, after which there was a resurgence in the 1970s with the introduction in 1973 of the *urethane*[1] wheel, which afforded a faster, smoother, grippier ride. This "Second Wave" (Brooke 1999, 44) of the pastime/sport started predominantly in the beach towns of California and Florida, but it quickly spread across North America and worldwide, becoming particularly popular in the UK and Australia but also reaching Japan, Brazil and elsewhere. Urethane enabled skaters to explore banked, concrete or asphalt terrain, including drainage ditches, *reservoirs* (Figure 1A) and drained swimming pools (Figure 1B) (Borden 2019, 98–102), where they emulated surfing moves such as *kick-turns*. This crucial phase in the development of skating from ballet-like flat-land moves, through surf-styled *carving* and onto athletic *airs* (Figure 1D), is dramatically chronicled in the documentary film *Dog Town and Z-Boys* (dir. Peralta 2001).

As skateboarding grew in popularity, purpose-built skating facilities were constructed to keep the vast numbers of riders off the streets, as well as to cash in on what appeared to be an unstoppable phenomenon. The first proper *skateparks*, which were constructed in California, Florida, Japan and, surprisingly, New Zealand (Snyder 2015, 73–75) (Figures 1C and 2), initially mimicked the ditches and reservoirs that skaters had already been riding, but before long new elements were introduced such as the *snake run* and *moguls*, and eventually deep, steep-sided *bowls* and *pipes* to meet the demand for *vert* riding, where the curved walls of a bowl or ramp reaches 90° and the ascending skater appears to defy gravity for a brief moment, before riding back down the *transition*. More advanced materials and methods were applied to skatepark construction such as the *shotcrete* and *gunite* concrete application processes, as well as an ultra-smooth white *marbellite* finish used in many swimming pools.

Hundreds of skateparks were built across the US and the rest of the world over a four-year period, particularly at US East and West Coast hotspots, as well as in the UK, which was hit hard by the skating boom despite its less favourable weather (Jones 1999; Macdonald and Adams 2023) (Figure 2). They were seen as a good business

1. Skateboarding and related technical terms in this article are introduced in italics, indicating that readers can consult a glossary located before the reference list.

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FIGURE 1. A: Skating existing concrete structures, prior to the emergence of skateparks, Escondido Reservoir, California (*SkateBoarder*, August 1976; photographer unidentified; skater unidentified). **B:** Tony Alva riding a drained swimming pool in Los Angeles during the California drought of 1976–1977 (*Thrasher Magazine*, March 1997; photographer unidentified). **C:** Canon's Creek Skatepark, New Zealand, the world's oldest surviving skatepark, built in 1974 (photographed by Sean Goff). **D:** Skater performing an air out of a purpose-built skate bowl, Skate City, London, 1977 (photographed by Ben Liddell; skater: John Sablosky). **E:** Advertisement from the July 1977 issue of *SkateBoarder* for the company Skatepark Constructors promoting the purported financial benefits of skatepark development.

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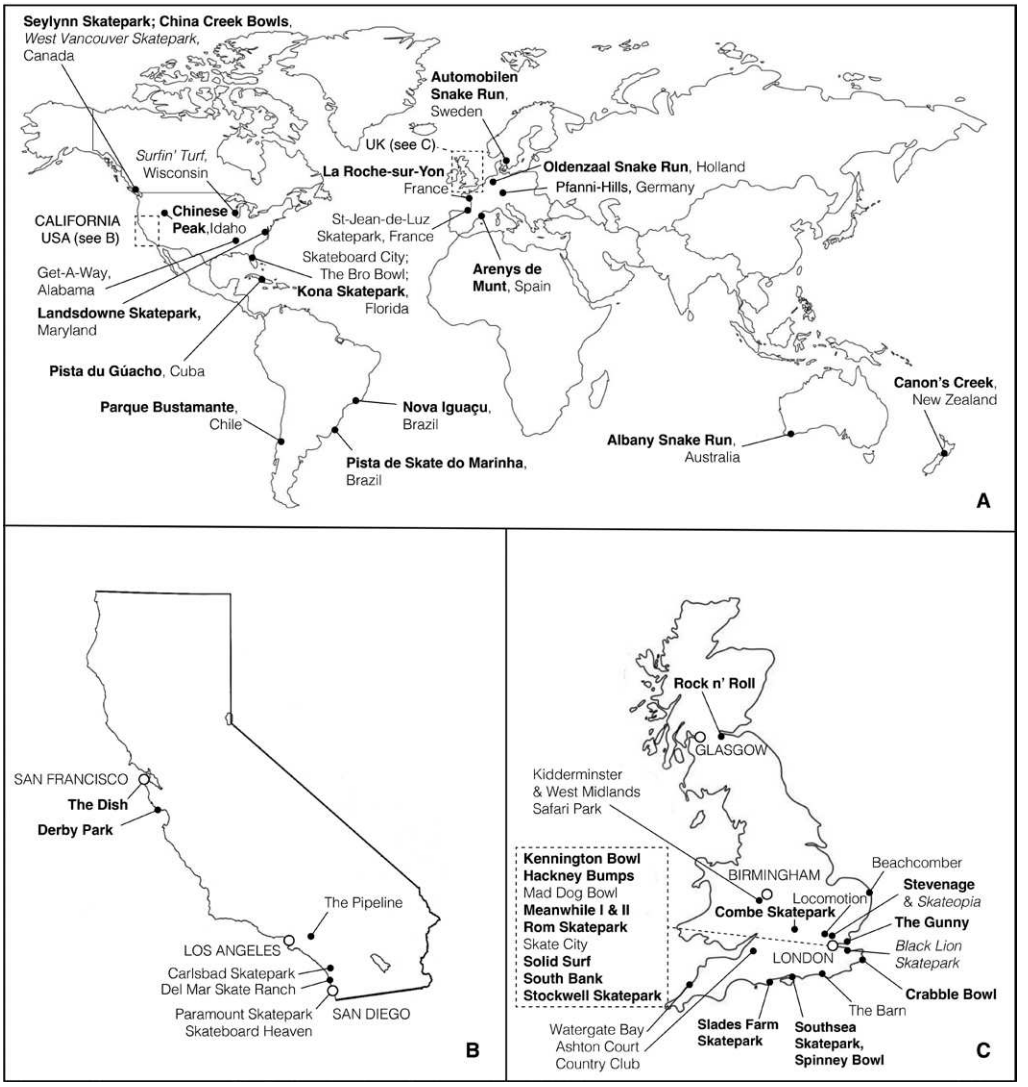

FIGURE 2. Map of late 1970s–early 1980s skateparks referred to in this paper. In use sites in bold, lost sites in light font, buried/dormant sites in italics. Surfin' Turf in Wisconsin has recently been excavated but is not skateable at the time of writing. Very little of the original features exist at The Dish in California and at Meanwhile 1 in the UK, due to more recent alterations. The South Bank Undercroft in the UK is an adopted skateboarding structure rather than a purpose-built skatepark. Hackney Bumps was built in 1986. The details of the indicated parks are given in the Supplementary Online Materials; for other lists and maps see Borden (2019, chapter 7), Haythorpe (1978, 26–27), Trawler (2021, 274) and Snyder (2015, 844–859).

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opportunity at the time (Figure 1E) and attracted entrepreneurs of all sorts, with varying knowledge of skating and experience in design (Trawler 2021, 10), resulting in the building of all manner of concrete or asphalt structures. However, nearly all of them failed commercially, struggling from a combination of factors including increasing insurance costs, low user numbers and expensive lease renewals. Consequently, all but a few of the original 1970s skateparks had been demolished, filled in and/or redeveloped by the early 1980s, as skating once more went underground.

Skateboarding then re-emerged as a popular activity in the late 1990s, and improved liability legislation, along with increasing recognition of its social accessibility and health benefits (Borden 2019, 264–281; Skateboard GB 2020), has meant that thousands of new concrete skateparks have been constructed worldwide since the turn of the millennium, far outstripping the original 1970s facilities in terms of numbers, complexity and technicality (Borden 2019, 144–171).[2] Whilst constantly innovating and diversifying, skateboarding has also, since the early 2000s, documented, studied and celebrated its history and heritage (Beato 1999; Cliver 2004; Gesmer 2004; Marcus and Griggi 2011; Snyder 2015; Sharp and Ausband 2017; Borden 2019; O'Malley 2019; Trawler 2021; Macdonald and Adams 2023). One aspect that has received some attention is the fate of the Second Wave concrete skateparks, only a fraction of which are still in use (Figure 2). In the USA, the birthplace of the sport, these include Kona in Jacksonville, Florida; Derby in Santa Cruz, California; and Landsdowne, near Baltimore, Maryland, Of these, only Kona is substantial and possesses a variety of features. More have survived in the UK, including large multicomponent facilities such as Rock 'n Roll in Livingston, near Edinburgh; Boyes Lyon in Stevenage, in Hertfordshire; Southsea Skatepark on the south coast; and, in London, Solid Surf in Harrow, Rom Skatepark ("The Rom") in Hornchurch and Stockwell Skatepark. There are also various small fragmentary remains. A scattering of original skateparks also exist elsewhere in the world, including Albany Snake Run in Western Australia; Oldenzaal Snake Run in the Netherlands; Arenys de Munt Skatepark in Catalonia, Spain; Seylynn Skatepark and China Creek Bowls in British Columbia, Canada; Nova Iguaçu Skatepark near Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and Pista de Skate do Marinha further south, in Porto Alegre; Parque Bustamante in Santiago de Chile; and Pista du Gaúcho in Cuba (Figure 2). Others lie buried, in unknown states of preservation but potentially still rideable; in the UK, examples include Black Lion Skatepark in Gillingham, Kent, and Skateopia in Knebworth Park in Hertfordshire; and in Canada, West Vancouver Skatepark.

Many of the remaining 1970s concrete skateparks are currently under threat due to a range of factors, including the value of the land on which they are built; poor appreciation of their architectural and cultural significance, both outside and within the skateboard world; a lack of protective legislation; low attendance numbers due to the widespread availability of new skateparks; and poorly thought-out or non-existent conservation strategies. Several important skateparks have disappeared in the last 20 years, despite attempts by skateboarders to save them. However, a small number of skateparks have also been successfully preserved, renovated and even excavated. Between 2014 and

2. F51, the world's first purpose-built multistorey indoor skatepark was opened in 2022 in Folkestone, UK (https://www.f51.co.uk).

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2016, the "Bro Bowl" in Tampa, Florida, as well as the aforementioned Rom Skatepark in the UK and Albany Skate Run in Australia were all given various degrees of historic building status in recognition of their cultural importance. Nevertheless, this was not enough to save the Bro Bowl from destruction, and The Rom is still at risk.

There is, therefore, an urgent need to assess the contemporary phenomenon of "skatepark heritage and archaeology", in order to inform decisions about the future of Second Wave skateparks that are either still in use or buried/dormant, as well as to document those that have been lost. This paper addresses the topic by exploring the history and current status of a selection of Second Wave skateparks from different parts of the globe. These case studies are then considered in the context of the heritage of other historical sports and leisure facilities, including football pitches, ball courts, athletics and motorsports tracks, and stadia (Bale 1988; Smith 2000; Wood 2005, 2016a, 2016b; Green 2012; Penrose 2012; Peterson and Robinson 2012; Inglis 2014; Ramshaw and Gammon 2017; Gaffney *et al.* 2019), to address the following questions: (1) what is the value and significance of 1970s–early 1980s concrete skateparks, and are they an important part of the historic environments in which they are located?; (2) if they can be considered to be of significance beyond their original intended function as arenas for skateboarding, what steps could be taken, officially recognized or otherwise, to acknowledge and develop this significance?; and (3) given the poor state of preservation of many of the few remaining early skateparks, how can they be repaired and conserved in order to sustain their heritage value, while still being ridden by skateboarders and other users?

Carlsbad Skatepark, California: A Missed Opportunity?

Carlsbad Skatepark in California was only the second concrete park built in the US during skateboarding's Second Wave, opening in March 1976 (O'Malley 2019, 114), less than one month after Skateboard City in Port Orange in Florida (Brooke 1999, 64; Snyder 2015, 69). It was the brainchild of 1962 *freestyle* champ John O'Malley and his neighbour Jack Graham, who worked in construction.

The park was built in two phases: first, a mellow surf-inspired collection of shallow *banks* and *berms* (O'Malley 2019, 110) (Figure 3A), referred to as the "Beginners Area"; and then, a more challenging second part – the "Mogul Maze" – added 18 months later (Borden 2019, 119). The latter featured the first ever example of concrete moguls (Figure 3B), plus a sinuous snake run, which became staple components of many subsequent Second Wave skateparks, but did not feature in many examples built after the 1970s. The park also contained a separate downhill/*slalom* run that ended in a large concrete berm, as well as a clubhouse and a skate shop. As with other very early parks, O'Malley and Graham constructed Carlsbad without a rulebook to follow, although they later produced one for prospective skatepark developers (Graham and O'Malley 1977).

Despite hosting the ABC / Hang Ten World Championships in September 1976 and visits by the original "Z-Boys" Tony Alva and Jay Adams, as well as by early female stars Kim Cespedes and Laura Thornhill Caswell, Carlsbad was quickly superseded by more challenging vert-oriented parks, such as the Del Mar Skate Ranch (1978–1987) just 15 miles down the coast. Nevertheless, it was a pre-emptive, highly innovative skatepark (Henry 2004; Snyder 2015, 69) that represented an important step in the development

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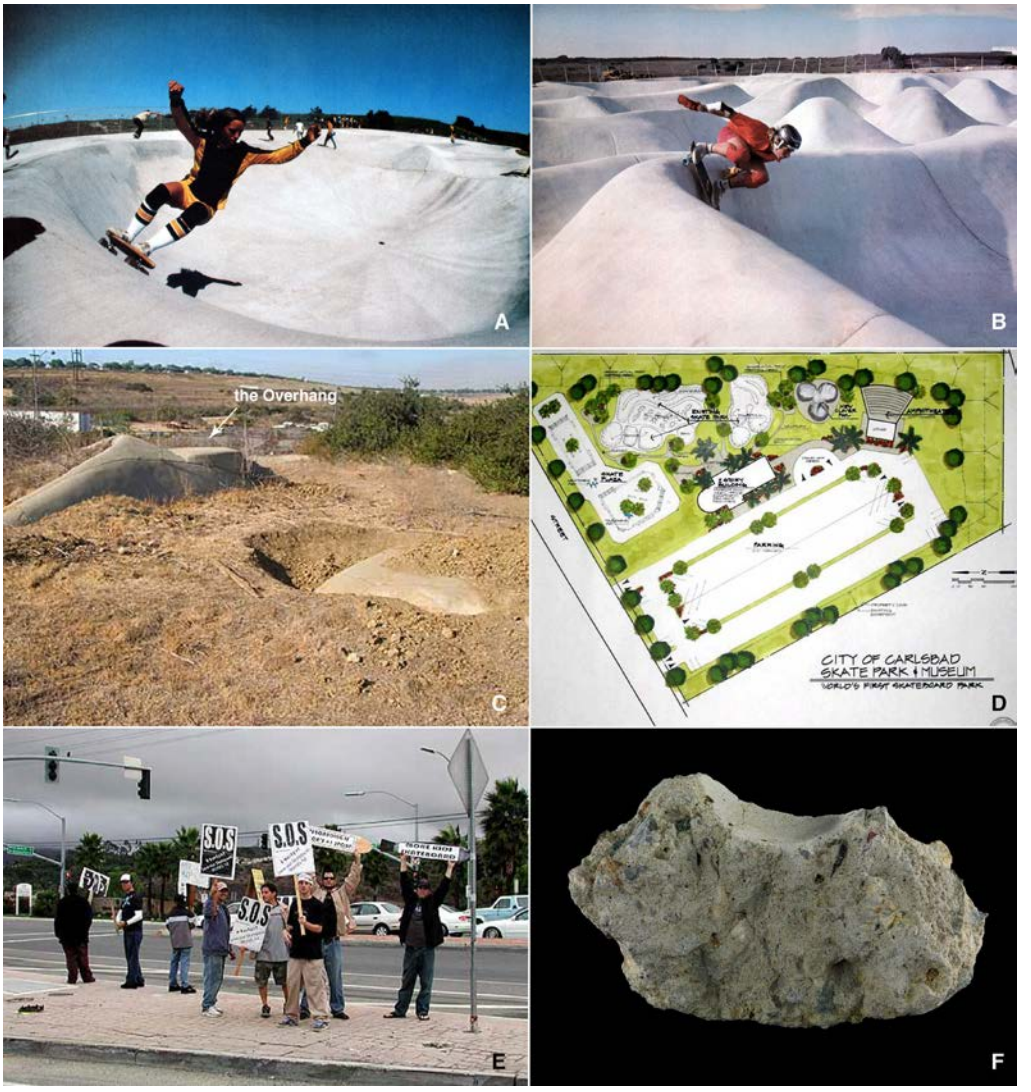

FIGURE 3. Carlsbad Skatepark, San Diego County, California. **A:** The Beginners' Area (*SkateBoarder*, August 1976, photographed by Warren Bolster; skater: Robin Logan). **B:** Mogul Maze (*SkateBoarder*, December 1977, photographed by Warren Bolster; skater: Dean Skipper). **C:** Half-buried mogul maze with the "Overhang" protruding from ground, 2004 (photographed by Dave Bergthold). **D:** "City of Carlsbad Skatepark and Museum" concept, 2004, by Louise Balma. **E:** "Save Our Skatepark" (S.O.S.) protest, 2004 (photographed by Dave Bergthold). **F:** Fragment of concrete retrieved from the bulldozed park curated by Smithsonian National Museum of American History (Catalogue No. 2015.3048.01).

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of skateboarding in its ancestral home of Southern California. Carlsbad closed its doors in 1979 as the popularity of skateboarding declined and insurance costs rose. The Beginners' Area was filled in with water and used as fishing ponds, while the Mogul Maze was covered with earth (Figure 3C).

Much of Carlsbad Skatepark lay half-buried and and in a good state of preservation for over 20 years, until the sale of the land to a developer in 2004. With the site facing destruction, a campaign called "Save Our Skatepark" (S.O.S.) was hastily initiated by Dave Bergthold, founder of the 1980s brand Blockhead Skateboards, and supported by Miki Vuckovich of the Tony Hawk Foundation, as well as the local skate company DC Shoes, which proposed that it be turned into the world's first skateboard museum (Figure 3D). Despite some minor publicity (e.g. Henry 2004), a protest (Figure 3E) and discussions with the Mayor of Carlsbad, all of which highlighted the importance of the park as a potential cultural asset to the area, permission had already been granted for the development and the land was bulldozed in early 2005.

The cleared site then lay unused for 15 years, perhaps suggesting that the developer wanted the skatepark gone before efforts to protect it gained significant traction. While interest in California's skateboarding heritage was growing at the time, the S.O.S. campaign does not appear to have been supported by certain local skate luminaries who potentially could have provided the exposure needed to save the park. Although Carlsbad is long gone, its memory lives on in countless classic photo shots from the now-collectible skateboarding magazines and books of the late 1970s (Gesmer 2004), as well as in other media, including advertisements and film (Borden 2019, 119). A fragment of concrete from the park is held by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (Figure 3F), highlighting its cultural significance.

Fakie Disaster![3] The Bro Bowl, Florida

The Perry Harvey Sr Park Skateboard Park, or Bro Bowl, was Florida's first free, ride-at-your-own-risk, public skateboard facility (Snyder 2015, 210). It consisted of a simple snake run ending in a shallow bowl containing several moguls (Figure 4A). The Bro Bowl was conceived by City of Tampa employee Joel Jackson as a place for inner-city kids to ride, but did not open until 1979, by which time several more extensive commercial parks with challenging vertical terrain had been built in the state. However, the subsequent closure of many such facilities meant that the mellow terrain of the Bro Bowl, as well as the Kona Skatepark in Jacksonville, were among the few purpose-built places left to skate.

The bowl was located next to the Central Park Housing Project (Figure 4B), resulting in a unique mix of users from different ethnic and social backgrounds, who could ride it without the typical restraints of privately owned parks (Borden 2019, 149). The Bro Bowl was visited by numerous pro riders and also featured in skate videos, such as *Birdhouse: The End* in 1998.

The Bro Bowl made it through skateboarding's ups and downs during the 1980s and 1990s. However, the removal of the neighbouring housing projects and subsequent plans to redevelop the downtown area around Perry Harvey Sr Park meant that, after nearly

3. A "*fakie disaster*" is a skateboarding trick performed on the lip of a bowl or ramp (see Appendix).

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FIGURE 4. The Bro Bowl, Tampa, Florida, USA. **A:** The bowl in use in 1980 (film still from *The Bro Bowl: 30 Years of Tampa Concrete* [dir. Durrett 2010], photographed by Paul Schmidt; skater: John McGuigan). **B:** Aerial photograph (scale bar = 100 m) from 1982 with the original site of the Bro Bowl (Historical Aerials). **C:** Aerial photograph from 2019 (scale bar = 100 m) with the Bro Bowl removed and the replica constructed (Historical Aerials). **D:** Laser-scanned replica of the Bro Bowl (video still from *Bro Bowl Tampa, FL Before & After* by Vantage Point U.A.S. LLC).

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30 years, its future was now under threat. A well-organized campaign to save the Bro Bowl was initiated by local skaters including Shannon Bruffet, and a documentary film, *The Bro Bowl: 30 Years of Tampa Concrete* (dir. Durrett 2010), was released, highlighting the skatepark's history, significance and planned destruction. On 7 October, 2013, Bruffet and colleagues succeeded, despite some opposition, in getting the Bro Bowl added to the US National Register of Historic Places.

This landmark decision – the first of its kind worldwide – to recognize the historical importance of a concrete skatepark officially, was perhaps intended to save the Bro Bowl. However, the facility still stood in the way of the redevelopment plans. A "compromise" was reached in the form of a laser-scanned concrete clone of the Bro Bowl, to be constructed 350 m the north of the site (Figure 4C, D). On 17 August, 2014, nearly 1000 people, including Joel Jackson, gathered to pay tribute to the Bro Bowl before it was removed the following year. The new skatepark, including the full replica of the original snake run, bowl and moguls,[4] was opened in April 2016 to a mixed reaction. The site of the original 1970s Bro Bowl is now a lawn (Figure 4C), suggesting that it may not have been in the way of the plans for Perry Harvey Sr Park after all, at least from a physical point of view.

In Search of the Eternal Wave: Albany Snake Run, Australia and Rom Skatepark, UK

Albany Snake Run in Western Australia and The Rom in East London are two very different 1970s skateparks on opposite sides of the globe (see Figure 2, above), which, since the destruction of the Bro Bowl above, share the honour of being the world's only existing heritage-listed skating facilities. Albany Snake Run or "Skate Track" (Snyder 2015, 77) was only the second skateboard facility to be built in Australia (Figure 5A) and owes its existence to a campaign by local pupils at Albany High School. It consists of a 140 m-long open shotcrete snake run (Figure 5B) that ends in a bowl.

Albany opened in February 1976, around the same time or perhaps just before the first US skateparks of Skateboard City in Florida and Carlsbad in California (Snyder 2015, 77; Borden 2019, 119). America's reigning skateboard champion Russ Howell attended the opening day, along with a large proportion of Albany's inhabitants, providing the park and the Australian skating scene with welcome publicity (e.g. Gillogly 1976, 53). The first Australian National Skateboard Championships was held at there in 1979 and the park continued to be well used into the 1980s.

In February 2016 Russ Howell visited again to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the park, an event that also included a screening of the documentary *The Snake Run* (dir. Zafir and Zafir 2016). Later that year, after an initiative started by the Skateboarding Heritage Foundation,[5] Albany Snake Run was added to the Heritage Council of Western Australia State Register of Historic Places,[6] "a statutory list of sites that represent the story of Western Australia's history and development".

4. The original concrete moguls also appear to have been transplanted to the new site, to create an ornamental feature beside the replica.
5. See http://www.skateboardingheritage.org.
6. "Albany Snake Run Skateboard Park": http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/fc0a60f2-df78-4c40-b66a-16a8c4dd070d.

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FIGURE 5. Albany Snake Run, Australia and Rom Skatepark, UK. A: Albany Snake Run being constructed in 1976 (*SkateBoarder*, August 1976, photographer unidentified). B: Albany Snake Run in 2016, 40 years later (photographed by Russ Howell). C: Aerial view of Rom Skatepark before the 2018 fire, with its original 1978 concrete components indicated (Google Earth). D: The Rom's marbellite pool in 1980 (photographed by David Belfrage; skater: Iain Borden).

In the UK some of the best Second Wave parks were designed by Adrian Rolt of G-Force and built by Skate Park Construction (Borden 2019, 133) for private entrepreneurs and local councils during 1978. The most extensive of these was Rom Skatepark or "The Rom", in Hornchurch, which had a rideable area of *ca*. 4000 sq m (Figure 5C) and consisted of three vert arenas: a *half pipe*, a *pool* and a "performance bowl", as well as a "cloverleaf bowl" and the classic mid-to-late 1970s components of a snake run, moguls, a reservoir and a downhill/slalom run. The straight-sided, trough-like half pipe with its vert extensions also featured in several other UK and US parks, and was a precursor to the wooden flat-bottom half pipe that later emerged in the 1980s. The Rom's white marbellite pool, complete with blue tiles and *coping* (Figure 5D), in contrast, harked back to the pre-skatepark days of riding empty Californian swimming pools in the summer of 1976 (see Figure 1B, above). Visitors to The Rom and other G-Force / Skate Park Construction parks, including Solid Surf in Harrow and Black Lion Skatepark

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in Gillingham, described below, could therefore emulate, under the grey skies of the UK, the exploits of their Californian heroes. The performance bowl was a vast subterranean concrete hemisphere with an above-ground vert extension, which represented the most challenging skateboarding experience available at the time, so much so that the extension was removed soon after the opening of the skatepark.

The Rom opened its doors in August 1978 as a private enterprise. However, it never returned its anticipated revenues and was quickly sold to the Greenwood family, who have owned it ever since. Its survival through skating's dark years was down to their tenacity, as well as to the *BMX* boom of the early-to-mid-1980s. Famous visitors included Bob Haro, the godfather of BMX freestyle, and 1988 members of the Powell Peralta "Bones Brigade", who at that time were the world's premier skateboarding team. The Rom has remained a regular stop for US professionals touring Europe and wanting to ride a large original late 1970s–early 1980s skatepark.

Inspired by the "Played in London" project (Inglis 2014), a study of the architectural sporting history of the city, Simon Inglis recommended to English Heritage (now Historic England) that one of London's early skateparks be considered for heritage listing. The Rom was chosen due to its larger size and more original state of preservation than other contemporaneous UK parks, such as Solid Surf in Harrow. The listing of a 1970s concrete sports structure, a status shared by certain churches, castles and other more conventional historic buildings in the UK, was a bold move at the time in the UK and naturally made the national news (e.g. *BBC News* 2014a).

The Rom's Grade II listing status[7] effectively protects the skatepark from any future demolition or redevelopment. However, a fire in July 2018 as well as poor attendance numbers meant that it closed its doors in 2019 for the first time 41 years. Thankfully, a group of local skaters raised funds and lent a hand to get it back on its feet, as chronicled in the documentary *Rom Boys: 40 Years of Rad* (dir. Harris 2020). Nevertheless, the park still faces challenges due to poor drainage, degradation of the concrete surface and issues with the ownership of the land on which it is located. This led to it being identified by Historic England as being "Heritage at Risk".[8]

Black Lion Skatepark, UK: Buried Treasure?

Black Lion Skatepark in Gillingham, Kent, was the last facility to be designed and built by G-Force and Skatepark Construction (Borden 2019, 133). Although slightly smaller than The Rom, Black Lion featured a half pipe, a snake run, a downhill/slalom run leading to a reservoir and a blue California-inspired pool (Figure 6A, B). The park opened as a private venture in August 1978 and was visited by notable skaters of the day including the UK's Simon Napper and, from the USA, Shogo Kubo and a young Lance Mountain. G-Force's Rolt and colleagues had honed their skatepark-building techniques by the time they got to Black Lion (*Skateboard!* 1979, 26–27; French 2021, 118), making it one of the finest late Second Wave examples in the UK. Except for the laying of concrete

7. List entry 1419328. "The Rom Skatepark Upper Rainham Road, Hornchurch, London, RM12 4ES". Online: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1419328.
8. List entry 410062. "The Rom Skatepark – Havering". Online: https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/410062.

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FIGURE 6. Black Lion Skatepark, Gillingham, Kent. **A:** Black Lion half pipe and pool in 1979 (*Skateboard!*, January 1979, photographer unidentified). **B:** Half pipe being infilled in 1988 (www.middle-age-shred.com, photographer unidentified). **C:** The site of the buried park in the present day (photographed by Patrick Quinn). **D:** Concrete exposed beneath shallow soil (photographed by Patrick Quinn).

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between the various bowls in 1981, when the local council took over the park (Figure 6B), Black Lion was not modified or altered during its active life.

The park was located close to terraced housing in a quiet corner of Gillingham, meaning that disturbance to local residents was a risk. This was managed while the park was in private hands (*Skateboard!* 1979, 28), but as an open public facility it seems that noise and nuisance complaints became too frequent, as the council filled in the bowls in 1988 (Figure 6B) and the land once more became covered with grass (Figure 6C). Since 2010, skateboarders have several times discussed the possibility on on-line forums and social media of digging up the park, resulting in a petition and unsuccessful negotiations with the local council. It is not known whether the concrete structure of the skatepark was damaged prior to it being infilled, apart from the removal of the extensions on the half pipe (Figure 6B, C). It has also been claimed that the bowls were plugged with contaminated landfill or even asbestos (French 2021, 120). Parts of the concrete flat ground surrounding the bowls can be seen at the present day, protruding through what appears to be a shallow layer of soil (Figure 6D), hinting at the potentially complete late 1970s skatepark lying not far beneath the surface of this now nondescript piece of land.

Community Archaeology: Arenys de Munt, Spain

The remains of Spain's first skatepark lie hidden up a dusty farm track outside the town of Arenys de Munt, 40 km east of Barcelona (see Figure 2, above). Built in 1979, it consisted of five runs or "pistas": a half pipe, two conjoining bowls, a snake run, a reservoir and a downhill/slalom run (Figure 7A). Despite its rural location, "Skatepark Arenys" became the epicentre of the Catalan skate scene and was closely associated with "Skate Club Catalunya". It hosted Spain's first skate competition and was visited by skaters from other parts of Spain as well as from elsewhere in Europe. Àngels Borrell,[9] one of Spain's first serious female skateboarders, was a local at Arenys during its heyday in the late 1970s–early 1980s (Figure 7B).

The park persisted until 1984, when the various bowls and runs were either destroyed or infilled. It then appears to have been forgotten about until *ca.* 2009, when local skaters drained the shallow reservoir / freestyle area and cleared it of debris. Building on this, another group, including Catalan professional skater José Manuel Roura, searched for the subterranean bowls, not knowing what state they were in. After digging an exploratory trench, they found the lip of the bowl, lying beneath several feet of sandy soil. Over the course of two years the group excavated by hand a 5 m infill of earth and debris dumped from the demolition of other parts of the park (Figure 7C), to reach the concrete transition of one of the bowls, which was still intact and rideable. This immense group effort was documented in the Nike SB-funded film *Digging* (dir. Mayor 2012), and veteran US pro skater Lance Mountain visited the newly rejuvenated park, providing exposure for the Barcelona skate scene.

The makeshift nature of the Arenys excavation and the lack of a fence at the site has meant that the bowls flood from time to time and are heavily graffitied. Nevertheless,

9. See video "Skate Club Catalunya.Skatepark Arenys de Munt.(1979)", on Àngels Borrell YouTube channel, https://youtu.be/lFMndah-nOk.

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FIGURE 7. Skatepark Arenys, Catalonia, Spain. **A:** Original advert for the skatepark, 1979 (www.40sk8.com). **B:** Àngels Borrell skating Arenys half pipe in 1979 (film still from *Monopatín: Un Recorrido pour les origins del Skate en la España* [dir. Prados and Temboury 2013]). **C:** Skaters, including José Manuel Roura (right) excavating the infill of one of the twin bowls by hand in 2011(photographed by Enric Tejerina – see Mayor 2012). **D:** Arenys twin bowls and reservoir/ freestyle area (upper left) at the present day (photographed by Patrick Quinn).

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the park is still skateable in the drier months of the year, by anyone determined enough to make the trek. Its isolated location should hopefully ensure that the park survives in its current state for another 40 years, with only occasional cleaning and minor repairs.

Small Finds: Combe Skatepark, Crabble Bowl, Spinney Bowl and The Gunny, UK

Scores of smaller bowls, banks and runs were also constructed by councils, community groups or individuals during the Second Wave, to serve the skateboarders of small towns and villages as the global phenomenon took hold. Despite their poorer quality and less-challenging terrain, a surprising number of such minor structures still exist in the UK, often in locations where pressure for space is less critical. Examples include Combe Skatepark near Oxford, Crabble Bowl in Dover, Spinny Bowl near Gosport on the south coast and The Gunny on Canvey Island, Essex. Combe opened in 1978 in the corner of the village park and has remained there ever since (Figure 8A). It was renovated in 2015 by the local community, who filled in cracks that had developed in the structure. Crabble Bowl, which is less of a bowl and more a set of concrete banks built against a natural slope at the end of a disused tennis court (Figure 8B), was Dover Council's answer to the needs of local skaters in 1978 (Doherty, n.d.). Its survival in the present day is more down to its hidden location than its perceived value as a place to skate. Nevertheless, it can still be ridden, if first swept free of broken glass and other debris. Spinny Bowl in Gosport, Hampshire, is another small neglected purpose-built late 1970s "skatepark" that is poorly known outside its local area. This simple berm-shaped structure and the adjoining banks (Figure 8C) were constructed by the same company that was responsible for the much larger and more regularly used Southsea Skatepark in nearby Portsmouth.

The Gunny on Canvey Island is perhaps the most unlikely remaining Second Wave skate structure in the UK. As with Crabble in Dover, the local council, rather than build a proper skatepark, simply created some rideable terrain to keep skaters off the streets by adapting an existing disused feature. In the case of The Gunny, the underlying structure happened to be the remains of a World War II heavy anti-aircraft gun site, hence its nick-name. Constructed in 1978, asphalt was used instead of concrete to produce three small interconnected banks (Figure 8D), which are still in existence, though barely rideable. The military structure that they were built on is of national historic importance and was listed as a Scheduled Monument by Historic England in 2011.[10] However, the "skatepark", perhaps not surprisingly, is not included in this scheduling. Planned regeneration of the site into a new community space will, at the time of writing, result in the removal of the 1970s tarmac banks.

Discussion

Having considered the character, history and current status of several extant, buried/dormant and extinct late 1970s–early 1980s concrete skateparks in various parts of

10. List entry 1020144. "Heavy Anti-Aircraft Gunsite, 170m South West of the Junction of Cedar Road and West Crescent." Online: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1020144?section=official-list-entry.

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FIGURE 8. Examples of minor late 1970s skate structures in the UK. A: Combe Skatepark, near Oxford, at the present day (photographed by Patrick Quinn; skaters: Greg, Masha and Matilda Greetham). B: Crabble Bowl, Dover, Kent at the present day (photographed by Patrick Quinn; skaters: Patrick and Shannon Quinn). C: Spinny Bowl, Gosport, Hampshire in the present day (photographed by Patrick Quinn). D: The Gunny, Canvey Island, Essex at the present day (photographed by Patrick Quinn).

the world, these and other examples can be used to address the aims of the present study, namely to assess the value and significance of these unconventional historic structures, as well as to suggest possible strategies for their protection and management. To achieve this, the following discussion also draws on contemporary studies into the heritage and archaeology of other popular twentieth-century sports and pastimes, as well as heritage theory, guidance and law, particularly in the UK, where many of the featured skateparks are located.

The Significance and Value of Second Wave Skateparks

An important first question concerns the significance and value of the surviving Second Wave skateparks. To understand this it is useful to consider the four categories of heritage value set out by Historic England (Drury and McPherson 2008, 28–32): "evidential", "historical", "aesthetic" and "communal". Within *ca*. 24 months of the first purpose-built concrete skate facilities appearing in the US, several hundred similar structures had been built in many other countries worldwide, as discussed above. Of these, it is estimated that less than 5% remain in use.[11] Skateparks from the 1970s were once common, but have now all but disappeared from the landscape. Indeed, as few as four ridable

11. Based on data in Snyder (2015, 852–859).

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large-scale multicomponent original skateparks with multiple bowls and runs appear to survive worldwide.[12] These few remaining "places"[13] therefore hold "evidential value" as extremely rare examples of a previously unseen architectural phenomenon that suddenly appeared in the landscape and would have seemed very modern and progressive at the time of their construction. Given the relatively recent date of the earliest concrete and asphalt skateparks, it could be argued that they are amply documented by photography and moving images. However, as functioning sports arenas, the physical remains of these places have added evidential value in that they can still be directly experienced by anyone able to use a skateboard in the same way that 1970s riders would have done when these facilities were first constructed. In addition, these surviving skateparks were effectively the experimental prototypes from which the far more numerous skateparks of the twenty-first century have been developed, thus providing evidence for contemporary skateboarding's reliance on its earlier sites and practices.

The appearance of the original Second Wave skateparks was connected to a new[14] sport/leisure activity that quickly became a form of creative expression, a youth movement and a cultural phenomenon. Skateboarding's Second Wave saw the global spread of California/Florida surf-inspired culture and the birth of alternative extreme sports as daring alternatives to more organized mainstream leisure activities. This process accelerated with the emergence of street skateboarding in the 1980s and 1990s, and has since gone on to exert a significant influence on fashion, music and even speech (Turner 2016; Borden 2019, 24–47), which can be felt in the present day in terms of the popularity of skateboarding clothing brands and the entertainment appeal of televized skating, BMX and snowboarding competitions such as the X-Games and now the Olympics, with skateboarding making its debut at Tokyo 2020. Skateparks were a key component of this new cultural package, offering a social space in which skateboarding could move away from its early surf-inspired origins into something more distinctive and self-focused. The remaining parks are therefore of important "historical value", through which "past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present" (Drury and McPherson 2008, 28). They are illustrative of the arrival of something new and exciting, which affected many young people's lives. The impact of this almost otherworldly phenomenon in economically depressed areas and periods – such as 1970s UK – is hard to understate.

While skateparks were in part inspired by pre-existing human-made structures, the size, shape and profiles of these features were radically changed during their translation

12. These are all in the UK: Rom, Solid Surf, Southsea and Rock n' Roll. Kona in Florida has a snake run and freestyle/reservoir area surviving from the 1970s, but its other features were apparently added later. Chinese Peak in Idaho, La Roche-sur-Yon in France and Oldenzaal in Holland are all composed of three components. In addition, an unknown number of buried or partially excavated multicomponent parks of this size exist, which include Surfin' Turf in Wisconsin, and Black Lion in Gillingham and Skateopia at Knebworth in the UK.
13. The term "place" can be used as a proxy for any part of the historic environment, and "goes beyond physical form, to involve all the characteristics that can contribute to a 'sense of place'" (Drury and McPherson 2008, 13–14).
14. Although skateboarding was not new in the late 1970s, the late 1960s "First Wave" was not felt in many countries. The impact of the urethane wheel in terms of ride quality was so dramatic that the sport/pastime was effectively re-invented.

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into purpose-built skateboardable terrains. A good example of this is swimming pools, whose alternative skatepark versions have deeper bowls, more complex shapes and/or *roll-in* elements. Other skatepark features, such as snake runs and mogul fields, are adapted from surf riding[15] and skiing[16] and represent a concrete landscape unlike anything else ever built in the world of architecture and art. Aesthetically, early skateparks differ in several ways from most of their more modern counterparts. The first facilities were very mellow, open structures designed for a laid-back surf-style of riding (see Figure 1C, E, above), that is today overlooked in many modern skateparks in preference to deeper, more aggressive transitions that include vert. This means that these earliest bowls and runs are of unique "aesthetic value", and offer a different user experience that cannot be provided by recent parks, which are often more suited to aerial or street-based manoeuvres. While many later Second Wave skateparks incorporated vert elements, they also featured snake runs, moguls, downhill/slalom runs and the original incarnation of the half pipe, without a flat bottom, which are not included in most modern facilities. All these components are preserved and still rideable at The Rom, which sets this large survivor apart from the multitude of new parks around the world. Other heritage skateparks also demonstrate innovative early solutions to the challenge of constructing curved concrete terrain, such as Kennington Bowl and Meanwhile II in London, both of which exemplify the prefabricated concrete "Radical Banking" modular system developed by Lorne Edwards and The Great Outdoors Company as a turnkey solution for local councils seeking to provide skateboarding facilities.

While skateboarding is a progressive sport, since the turn of the millennium it has also looked back to its past for inspiration, and there is now evidence that aspects of early skatepark architecture may be making a comeback. The design of the modern structures and stadia of certain other sports, such as American baseball parks (Green 2012), have also been influenced in a similar way by skateparks' earliest incarnations. By retaining aesthetically and functionally unique early skateparks such as The Rom, these can consequently serve as a template for modern interpretations of the original concrete forms that laid the foundations of the sport. For example, the "moonscape" of berms and moguls at the McNair Gravity Park in Livingston, Montana (2017), bears a strong resemblance to Carlsbad skatepark,[17] while the deep polished-concrete pool of the F51 skatepark in Folkestone in southeast England (2022), replete with bull-nose coping, glazed ceramic tiles and double waterfall, harks back to those of the first vert parks, which themselves mimicked the drained backyard pools of 1970s California.[18]

Skating has always represented more than a pastime for many riders and its community, and early skateparks are significant sites of cultural expression. They have gained a kind of collective aura as landmark destinations within skateboarding culture that committed riders will travel to, often over considerable distances. Skaters have always

15. A snake run is intended to map out in elongated concrete form the surfer's journey along a moving wave.
16. Mogul fields are natural snowy hillocks that are enlarged and shaped into series of obstacles to be ridden by skiers.
17. See https://www.evergreenskateparks.com/livingston-montana-skatepark.
18. See https://www.f51.co.uk.

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had a keen sense of exploration, seeking out and riding specific types terrain in the urban environment (Borden 2019, 98–117, 194–221), be that purpose-built skateparks or "adopted"/"found spaces" meant for other purposes, such as banked walls, steps, handrails or even a particularly long smooth road. Many of these have significant "communal value" within the skate world and are subject to secular pilgrimages (O'Connor 2017), such as the Undercroft at the South Bank Centre in London, an originally unused space which has been a "Mecca" for UK skating since the late 1970s (Brooke 1999, 43) and which was successfully retained as a place to ride by the community-driven "Long Live Southbank Campaign" in 2014 (*BBC News* 2014b).

At a general level, sporting heritage is a key part of the wider cultural landscape of towns and cities (Bale 1988; Wood 2005, 2016a). The value of historic stadia, courts, tracks, clubhouses and other structures associated with both well-established sports (e.g. football: Smith 2000; Peterson and Robinson 2012; baseball: Green 2012; and athletics: Penrose 2012) and those consigned to history (e.g. "Eton Fives": Inglis 2014, 13, 27, 98) is being increasingly recognized, and their study is a growing field of research. These cherished locations convey an "intense sense of identity and a keenly distinctive aspect of place" for those who participated in or watched the sports or pastimes that they were built to serve (Wood 2005, 143). Such heritage sites are important destinations for tourism and therefore valuable assets for towns and cities keen to associate themselves with a particular sport and attract visitors (Ramshaw and Gammon 2017). For example, the construction of the large vert skatepark Rock 'n Roll in Livingston in Scotland in 1981, at the end of skateboarding's Second Wave, when many other facilities were closing, put this provincial new town on the map in the minds of skaters, such as US professionals who have visited it ever since. Over 40 years on, the park's significance is set to be recognized beyond the skating world and capitalized on more widely – at the time of writing (April 2023), Livingston is under active consideration for heritage status by Historic Environment Scotland.

Strategies for Protection of Built Skate Heritage

It seems clear that the small number of large and complete early concrete skateparks of the late 1970s–early 1980s are an important part of late-twentieth-century cultural heritage. Despite this value, though, several examples have been destroyed in the last ten years (e.g. the above-discussed Bro Bowl in Florida and Pfanni-Hills in Munich Germany) and others are under threat (e.g. Solid Surf and Southsea Skatepark, both in the UK). In response to the second aim of this study – exploring what might be done to protect early skateparks – an important first step is to *document the existence and state of preservation* of the remaining Second Wave structures. Following a study on the historic sporting venues of Manchester, UK, this should consist of desk-based research to identify sites, backed up by "fieldwork to verify the degree of survival of the places identified and to assess the condition and context of the various sites" (Heritage Consultancy Services 2002, quoted by Wood 2005, 140). The present paper is an initial step in this direction, but there is much still to do in terms of identifying, documenting and visiting other remaining Second Wave concrete skateparks not covered here, particularly in places such as Latin America and Japan, as well as monitoring potential

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threats to their integrity and existence. Despite a few lists of heritage parks (e.g. Borden 1998, appendix A; Snyder 2015, 844–859; Trawler 2021, 274) there are many gaps. The details of the 50+ skateparks mentioned in this study (see Figure 2, above) are outlined in the Supplementary Online Materials and can hopefully be added to, in order to create a more definitive database of extant, buried/dormant and extinct sites.

Aerial photography can be a useful tool for the investigation of potential buried/dormant structures (Figure 9A), as well as for reconstructing the recent history of both extant and lost parks (Figure 9B). Archaeological geophysics, which increasingly is being applied to recent sites including twentieth-century sporting structures (Gaffney *et al.* 2019), also has the potential to reveal the state of preservation of buried skatepark remains, given that most were hastily infilled and without documentation. Indeed, ground-penetrating radar has already been used, albeit inconclusively, to investigate West Vancouver Skatepark, which was built in 1977 and buried in 1984 (Figure 9C) (Muckle and Emmett 2016).

Save for the recent unearthing of several infilled heritage parks, including Arenys de Munt in Spain and the Surfin' Turf or "The Turf" (1979) in Milwaukee, archaeological excavation has not yet been applied to buried skate remains. The detailed excavation of former football stadia (Peterson and Robinson 2012; Wood 2016b) demonstrates that information on the recent history of such places as well as their "after-life" can be revealed through the study of built structures and artefacts buried beneath the ground.

Notwithstanding certain notable campaigns by skateboarders to save specific old skateparks and perhaps a general fondness for them among riders of a certain age, there does not seem to be sufficient appreciation of their importance within the wider skate community or further afield.[19] This has meant that many have been lost to the needs of land development, without appropriate resistance or challenge. A second important task in preserving the remaining Second Wave skateparks for future generations is therefore to *increase awareness of skatepark existence and heritage value*. This could begin with a survey of views and attitudes in the skateboarding world and among the wider public, to discover what people think about skate heritage and its role in the historic environment. This could also be followed by a consultation exercise with "policy shapers, decision makers and opinion formers", especially surrounding planning issues (Wood 2005, 140). In addition, *a framework is required to highlight and communicate the historic value of early skateparks and adopted skate structures*, as well as their social, cultural, economic and environmental potential.

The heritage listing of three Second Wave skateparks in different parts of the world between 2014 and 2016 and the media interest that this received has been a crucial step in highlighting the built remains of skateboarding as a part of late twentieth-century culture worth celebrating and protecting. That other skateparks in the UK have been considered (e.g. Bowes Lyon in Stevenage) or are being considered (e.g. Rock 'n Roll in Livingston – Campsie 2023), is also encouraging. However, Bowes Lyon, which contains

19. For example, of the 652 projects funded by the Skatepark Project Foundation (formerly the Tony Hawk Foundation – https://skatepark.org/about/), a large nonprofit organization that "helps underserved communities create safe and inclusive public skateparks […] and favours projects that have strong community involvement, grassroots fundraising, and a base of support from skaters", it appears that only one (The Dish, San Francisco) has involved the "renovation" (see below) of an existing heritage park.

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FIGURE 9. Documentation of heritage skateparks past and present. **A:** Aerial photo (scale bar = 25 m) of land adjacent to Knebworth House, Hertfordshire, UK, with vegetational evidence for the buried remains of Skateopia, clearly showing the layout of the original 1978 park (DuckDuckGo Maps). **B:** Aerial photographs (scale bar = 100 m) revealing the sequence of changes to the former Carlsbad Skatepark, California (Historical Aerials). **C:** Ground-penetrating radar being used to investigate the buried remains of West Vancouver Skatepark, Canada (photographed by Mark Lemmon.

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three well-preserved original components – namely a half pipe, a cloverleaf bowl and a freestyle area – was judged to be too small, incomplete and modified to be approved for listing.[20] Of course not all remaining late 1970s–early 1980s skate structures are necessarily worth preserving (e.g. Crabble Bowl and The Gunny in the UK). Nevertheless, a very small number of large and fairly complete multicomponent parks (e.g. Solid Surf in Harrow and Rock 'n Roll in Livingston) are clearly of historical importance, yet remain unrecognized from a heritage point of view.

The case of the Bro Bowl in Florida, which as discussed above was replicated in a different location in order to make way for a different use of the original site, demonstrates that heritage listing does not equate to protection. Similarly, the Grade II heritage status given to The Rom in the UK is not a preservation order, but simply means that listed buildings consent would be required to make changes to the park that may affect its special interest.[21] The recognition of Albany Snake Run in Australia as a historic place, at state level, also affords it little real protection.[22]

Alternative approaches to historic designation are also possible. For example, Stockwell Skatepark, a medium-sized mellow urban park in London, built in 1978, was potentially under threat due to the construction of apartments on adjacent land. In 2015, a group of users successfully applied to the local council for the park to be designate as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) that has "a main use or purpose of furthering the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and could do so into the future".[23] Should an ACV be offered for sale, then the community has six months to raise the funds to bid to buy it. Luckily, Stockwell was saved, resurfaced and renovated as part of the said development.

Yet another way to protect heritage skate structures is to *build a new modern skatepark around or beside an original park, bowl or pipe*. This has been applied – admittedly with limited success – to the "preservation" of The Dish in San Francisco, a shallow bowl from 1979 that was well respected by the Northern California skate community and has appeared in numerous magazines and videos. In 2016, as part of a larger programme of works at Hilltop Park, in which it is located, The Dish was remodelled by incorporating the mellow bowl into a larger skatepark with more challenging components. While the overall idea – to improve the recreational facilities available in a depressed part of the city – was certainly well meaning and achieved this particular goal, the resulting works have in the process absorbed The Dish (Figure 10A). In this respect, the character and experience of the original bowl appears to have been lost. Another example of an early skatepark that lost much of its original form as a result of renovation is Meanwhile Gardens, aka "Meanwhile 1" (1977), in London, in this case during the early 2000s.

More promisingly, the aforementioned Surfin' Turf, or "The Turf" (1979), an indoor skatepark in Milwaukee, which was buried in 1996 and unearthed in 2020, is at the time

20. The assessment, by Historic England (Case Number: 1430893), compares Bowes Lyon to Rom Skatepark, the world's largest and most complete Second Wave facility and appears to reject it on this basis.
21. See https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/.
22. While Albany Snake Run was added to the State Register of Heritage Places, it does not have a Protection Order, which can also be granted to historic buildings by the state of Western Australia.
23. See "The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012." Online: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2012/9780111525791/contents.

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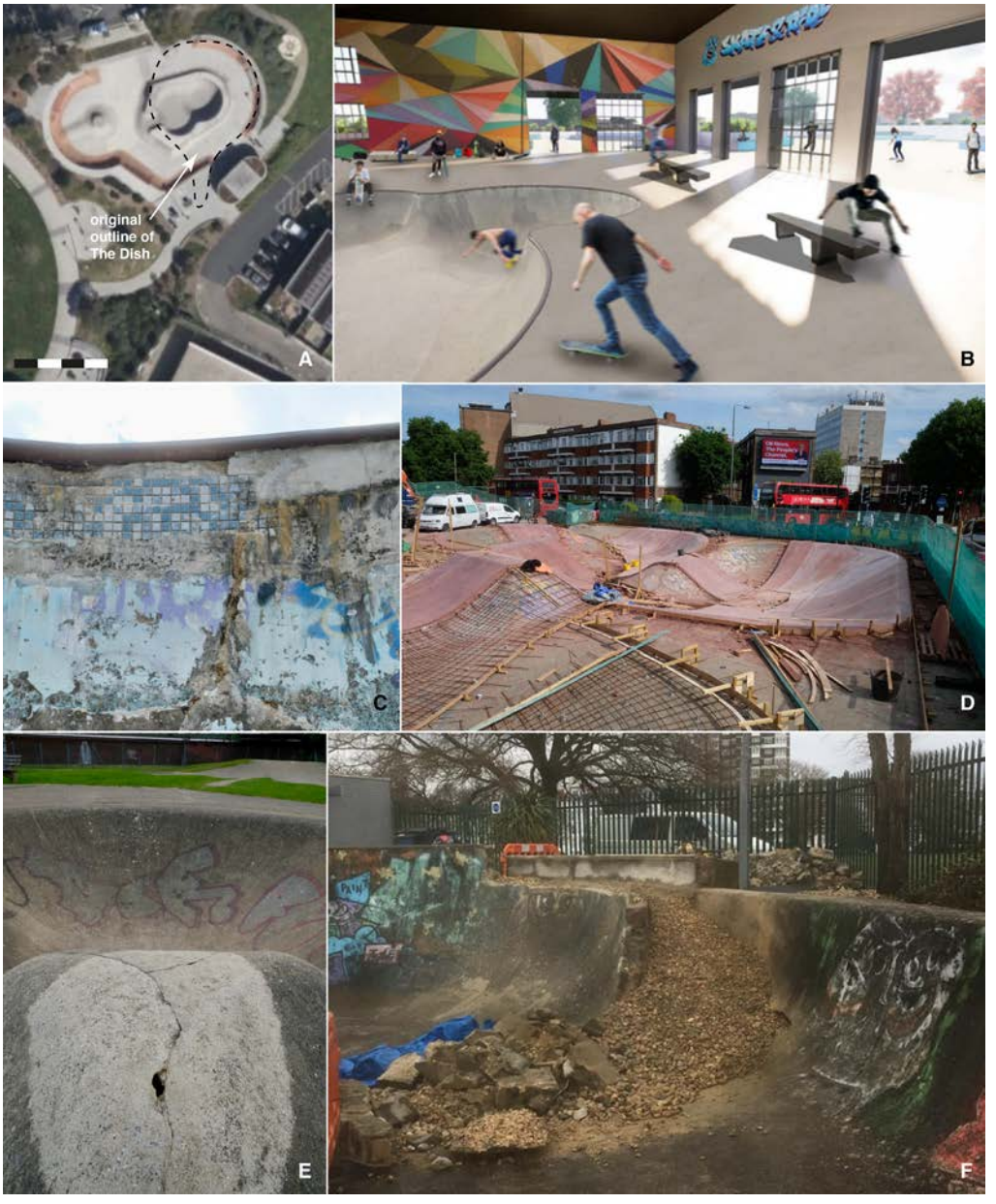

FIGURE 10. Preservation, repair and conservation of heritage skateparks. **A:** "Renovation" of The Dish, San Francisco with footprint of the original bowl (DuckDuckGo Maps). **B:** Artist's impression of the planned restoration of The Turf, Milwaukee (School of Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee). **C:** Close-up of degraded and poorly repaired pool bowl at Solid Surf, UK (photographed by Patrick Quinn). **D:** Re-surfacing of Stockwell Skatepark, UK, summer 2022 (photographed by Patrick Quinn). **E:** Polished concrete test area at Solid Surf (photographed by Patrick Quinn). **F:** Removal of historic "improvements" to the "Spoon Bowl" feature at Southsea Skatepark, UK, in 2018 (photographed by Sam Tuffnell).

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of writing planned to be incorporated within a new skating facility on the same site.[24] The idea, should the project be realized, is to resurrect the five concrete bowls in their original form and to house them indoors (Figure 10B), as with the original 1970s incarnation of the park. This bold vision represents a well-thought-out approach to reinstating a valued original skatepark while simultaneously providing modern facilities for skaters at the same location. It aims to celebrate the heritage of skateboarding via physical remains of its past and offer visitors an opportunity to experience this. Indeed, this is an idea that was proposed for Carlsbad (see Figure 3D, above), but not realized.

Legacy Skatepark Repair and Conservation

Retaining old skateparks of value and significance in the face of development is a challenge to which there are clearly several solutions. Once protected, legally or otherwise, these structures also need to be managed in various ways to ensure that their heritage value is sustained in the face of change (Drury and McPherson 2008, 22). This may include sensitive repairs necessary to reveal and reinforce specific features as well as on-going monitoring and conservation. Concrete is a durable material; however, it is still subject to weathering, particularly in colder, wetter climates. Asphalt is less resistant to decay, as illustrated by the fragmentary nature of St Jean de Luz Skatepark in France, which is heavily fragmented and unrideable. Added to this, the use of old skateparks over several decades has in many cases resulted in erosion, particularly to the edges and "coping" of bowls (Figure 10AC), which skaters *grind* with the metal *trucks* of their boards (see Figure 1A, above). Skate bowls can also suffer drainage problems (see Figure 7D, above), graffiti and vandalism, as well as damage from historic repairs or renovations of substandard quality. Such issues have rendered some legacy parks more or less unrideable, except by BMX bikers (e.g. Slades Farm Skatepark, UK, 1978, and parts of the Grade II-listed Rom Skatepark).

Outdoor skateparks are by definition surface features, made (most commonly) by pouring concrete or (occasionally) laying asphalt over sculpted earth (see Figure 5A, above), with or without a reinforced metal mesh.[25] Most are constructed of two or more layers, starting with coarser material, which is then covered with a finer layer that provides a smooth, fast riding surface (see Figure 8D, above). In many Second Wave parks this topcoat has worn away, exposing the coarser layer beneath. While this degradation may be acceptable in the case of some other twentieth-century concrete heritage structures, the continued use of many old skateparks means that their rough surfaces are slow to ride and also dangerous in the event of a crash or "bail". A solution to this problem, which has been applied in several cases such as Derby Skatepark in California, Nova Iguaçu in Brazil and Stockwell in London, is to re-surface by applying a new topcoat. If done properly, this has the effect of returning a rough and tired park to a riding condition similar to that which skaters would have experienced when it first opened. However, if carried out poorly, resurfacing may be detrimental to the original form and fabric of the facility, such as in the case of London's

24. See https://www.theturf.org/design/.
25. Indoor skateparks often incorporate riding surfaces made from wood, and are typically less permanent in nature.

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Kennington Bowl and at Stockwell; the latter has had to be resurfaced three times, most recently in summer 2022, due to the breakup of previous renovations (Figure 10D). Rather than remove the previous layer, a new coat of concrete had each time been laid directly on top of the previous one, thus gradually changing the contours of the park. An added concern is that resurfacing should hopefully match the materials (i.e. shotcrete or gunite concrete, asphalt, marbellite), finish and aesthetic properties of the original.

An alternative to resurfacing is to polish worn skateparks by grinding down protruding aggregate particles to create a smooth riding surface. The results can be very satisfactory, as seen in a test carried out at Solid Surf (Figure 10E) and in the complete renovation of another small London skatepark, Hackney Bumps, built in 1986, which was laboriously polished in 2021 by community volunteers.

Within weeks of the resurfacing of Stockwell Skatepark it was already heavily inscribed by street artists of all kinds. While graffiti would often be considered as vandalism at other historic buildings, murals and tagging have a long association with skating due to its links to music and street culture in general. The paint can, however, have drawbacks in terms of the grippiness of skating surfaces as well as potentially causing offence. Attempts to clean the walls of skate bowls from graffiti need to be carefully considered, as their removal can result in the further degradation of the often weathered surface beneath. At The Rom, for example, recent extensive jet washing of the bowls using high-pressure water has unfortunately exacerbated the already poor riding surface by removing cement binder and exposing more coarse aggregate. Sandblasting can be a better option, although it is more expensive and complicated to carry out.

As part of resurfacing and other renovations, it is not uncommon for additional elements to be added to old skateparks in the form of metal coping (Figure 10C), extensions to bowls or new features in the flat area of open shallow bowls and reservoirs. While these additions may increase the suitability of parks for modern skateboarding or protect them from specific types of wear, such as in the case of coping, they can be detrimental to the authenticity of a park and thus its heritage value (Figure 10A). Indeed, some previous "improvements" to old parks have subsequently been removed at great expense and/or effort to restore them to their original form and intended riding experience, such as at Kennington Bowl in London, which is currently being renovated, and the Spoon Bowl at Southsea Skatepark (Figure 10F – Powell 2018).

A key concern in managing early skateparks and maintaining their unique heritage value is to mediate between the various conservation options available. These need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the park's history, fabric, state or preservation and the nature of previous interventions. A balance clearly also needs to be sought between the needs of the structure as a heritage site and that of its present and future users as a place to ride.

Concluding Remarks

Concrete and asphalt skateparks built during skateboarding's Second Wave of the late 1970s–early 1980s, where they still exist, are architecturally rare and unique sporting heritage structures, with significant historic significance and value. They represent physical evidence of the early development of a phenomenon that remains popular

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and culturally relevant at the present day. Heritage skateparks also offer skateboarders a riding experience which is distinct from the vastly more abundant contemporary skateparks, and they serve as a location at which to engage directly with the history of the sport/pastime. While it is perhaps inevitable that further small fragmentary remains from this period will be lost, this paper has argued that it is important to act to protect the extremely rare surviving larger Second Wave skateparks and architecturally unique historical facilities from significant alteration or destruction. This can be achieved via a combination of careful documentation of the remaining structures that exist, increased awareness of their potential heritage value, consultation with policy makers and the development of a framework. Heritage designation, such as local or national listing, can also be useful, but may not be realistic in the case of modest heritage skateparks and fragmentary remains. Other strategies include the sensitive incorporation of legacy parks into upgraded modern skate facilities or rideable museums celebrating the history of skateboarding. Many early concrete and asphalt facilities also need to be repaired, conserved and managed in the face of change, in order to continue to function as skateparks while retaining their heritage value. This will hopefully ensure that they can be experienced and appreciated by future generations of skateboarders and non-skateboarders alike.

Glossary

Specialist skateboard terms used in the present paper.

Air
Skateboarding manoeuvre where all four wheels leave the ground. Often performed on a ramp. The rider and board may rotate 180°, or multiples thereof and land back on the ramp, or not rotate, in the case of a *fakie*. Seen in Figure 1D.

Bank
Abrupt sloping concrete or asphalt surface with flat run-up with that can be ridden with a skateboard or *BMX*, which is usually <45° and not *transitioned*. Seen in Figure 8B.

Berm
Curved corner *bank* that may or may not be *transitioned*. Seen in Figure 8C.

BMX
A form of robust single-speed bicycle with a small frame, small wheels and lowered saddle, that is often ridden in a *skatepark* to perform *airs* and other tricks.

Bowl
A curved dish-like depression with an often spherical or oblong shape, which may or may not reach *vert*, and may or may not have *coping*. Usually concrete or wood. Seen in Figures 3A, 7D, 8A.

Carve
Riding at high speed around a *bowl* or *pool* wall, steering with the *trucks* rather than lifting the wheels, using the centrifugal force of the curved feature to stay on the wall. Seen in Figure 3A.

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Coping
Round-bar metal or swimming pool-style stone edging placed at the top of a *transition* wall of skate *bowls* and *pools*, that skateboarders can *grind*. Seen in Figure 10C.

Deck
Flat plank-like wooden, or sometimes plastic or fibreglass, platform on a skateboard that the rider stands on.

Fakie Disaster
Skateboarding manoeuvre where the rider and board get *air* out of a ramp without rotating, then land with the middle of the board on the top edge of the ramp or *coping*, before riding back down, backwards.

Freestyle
Technical skateboard or *BMX* tricks performed on flat ground rather than ramps, *bowls* or obstacles.

Grind
Skateboarding manoeuvre where the skater "grinds" on the metal shaft of their *trucks* along *coping* or other edge.

Gunite
Method of applying concrete during *skatepark* construction, derived from swimming-pool fabrication, where cement and sand are forced along a pipe by compressed air, with water and sprayed out of a nozzle.

Half Pipe
Trough-like U-shaped ramp with two opposing curved *transitioned* sides that may or may not reach *vert* and may or may not have a flat section between them, which is usually longer than it is wide. Seen in Figures 6A, B, 7B.

Kick-Turn
Skateboarding manoeuvre where the board is turned 180°, or multiples thereof, by lifting the front wheels and rotating on the rear wheels. Seen in Figure 8B.

Marbellite
Hard, white plaster-like finish sometimes applied to swimming pools and *pool bowls* in *skateparks*.

Moguls
Skatepark feature offering a series of pronounced mounds, dips and bumps, inspired by the skiing feature of the same name. Seen in Figure 3B.

Pool
Skate *bowl* that emulates empty swimming pools with curved *transitioned* lower walls that reach *vert* and are often finished with a rim of tiles and *coping*, of the type found in America and were skated in California before the construction of the first *skateparks*. Seen in Figure 5D.

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Reservoir
Large shallow-sided skate *bowl* with gently sloped *banks* and no *coping*, based on concrete structures for the capture and storage of run-off water. Seen in Figures 1A, 7D.

Roll-In
Curved sloped entrance to a skate *bowl* or *pool*, allowing easier access and a run up to attack the *vert* wall.

Shotcrete
Method of applying concrete during *skatepark* construction, where pre-mixed sand, cement and water are piped together, with compressed air arriving at the nozzle for spraying.

Skatepark
Concrete, asphalt, wooden or metal arena composed of ramps and *bowls* that was purpose-designed for skateboarding. Seen in Figure 5C.

Slalom
Form of downhill skateboarding in which the rider weaves between a series of closely spaced cones by leaning their body and turning the *trucks*.

Snake Run
A bobsleigh-like *skatepark* feature typically composed of a sinuous snake-shaped pipe that runs downhill and becomes progressively deeper, through which riders descend by *carving* or *kick-turning*. Seen in Figure 5A, B, C.

Transition
Curved wall of a *bowl*, *pool*, pipe or other feature which transitions from horizontal towards vertical and in some cases beyond, that is ridden up and across in the manner that a surfer rides a breaking wave.

Trucks
Metal spindle-like devices affixed to the underside of the skateboard *deck*, to which the four wheels are attached, which enables the rider to steer.

Urethane
Synthetic plastic-based material (polyurethane) used to manufacture skateboard wheels, which was introduced in 1973 and led to skateboarding's Second Wave.

Vert
Section of skateboard *bowl* or *pipe* that reaches vertical and can be ridden by projecting up the *transition* at speed. Seen in Figures 1B, 5D, 7B.

Supplementary Online Materials

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